

PRESS KIT

Shin hanga

The new prints of Japan 1900 - 1960

13.10.2022 > 15.01.2023



ART & HISTORY  MUSEUM



BE CULTURE
ALL ABOUT ARTS COMMUNICATION

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1. PRESS RELEASE

The Shin hanga exhibition (14/10/2022 – 15/01/2023) will feature no less than 220 Japanese prints from two private collections in the Netherlands, as well as sketches, studies and prints from the collection of the grandson of the publisher Watanabe. Next to these works, the visitors will find a selection of Shin hanga prints from the rich collection of the Art & History Museum.

The Shin hanga (literally « new prints ») art movement was a revival of traditional printmaking (ukiyo-e) in the early 20th century. The publisher Watanabe Shōzaburō (1885-1962), noting the decline in xylographic production due to competition from new imported techniques such as photography and lithography, was the movement's greatest promoter. He gathered around him artists whose drawings were printed using traditional woodblock printing techniques.

While retaining classic themes such as landscapes, beautiful women (*bijin*), kabuki actors and flowers-and-birds, Shin hanga prints also reflect a modernizing Japan and seduce with a new aesthetic and an extremely high production quality. Artists: Kawase Hasui, Itō Shinsui, Ohara Koson, Kasamatsu Shirō, Komura Settai, ...

"This exhibition once again proves the versatility of the Art & History Museum's collection and the power of heritage in bringing together stories, communities and ideas across generations and continents." - Thomas Dermine, State Secretary for Economic Recovery and Strategic Investments, in charge of Science Policy.

This exhibition is a logical follow-up to the major Ukiyo-e exhibition held at the Museum in 2016-2017. It takes up the history of traditional printmaking in Japan where the 2016 exhibition ended.

For the exhibition, the museum cooperates with guest curator Chris Uhlenbeck.

2. ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

An exhibition of 'new prints' in the Art & History Museum

In organizing the exhibition Shin hanga, the Art & History Museum builds on the successful exhibitions of Japanese prints from its own collection: Utamaro – Twelve hours of green houses and other beauties (2012), Hokusai – Views of Mount Fuji and other landscapes (2013) (both at the Museums of the Far East) and on the exhibition Ukiyo-e – The most beautiful Japanese prints (2016-2017) at the Art & History Museum. With top items from its own collection, the most recent exhibition gave a chronological overview of printmaking – in Japanese ukiyo-e – from its early beginnings around 1650 until the start of the twentieth century.

The public particularly appreciated this latter set of prints. With the exhibition Shin hanga in 2022, the museum will pick up where the previous exhibition left off, that is with the important movement in Japanese printmaking at the start of the twentieth century.

This time, the public will see a selection of masterpieces from three leading shin hanga collections, that is two Dutch private collections and the Japanese collection of Watanabe Shōzaburō, the publisher who was the key figure of the shin hanga movement. For this exhibition, his grandson is lending prints that have never before been seen outside Japan. These loans are supplemented with shin hanga prints from the Art & History Museum's own rich collection.

Japanese printmaking

A Japanese print is a woodcut print. In other words, it is produced from a woodcut (or xylograph) done from an artist's drawing.

A print was originally a commercial product. The technique of printing made it possible to realize large editions of a design. A traditional Japanese print is the result of intense collaboration between a publisher, and the artist, copyist, block cutter and printer whom he coordinates.

Traditional printmaking in Japan flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with big names that also became known in the West, like Utamaro, Hokusai and Hiroshige.

When prints, along with other Japanese artefacts, came on sale in Europe and America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, they were enthusiastically acquired by artists and collectors. In this way they played an important role in the emergence of so-called 'Japonisme' and exerted a major influence on artistic innovation in the West.

The twentieth century

Around 1900, the production of traditional woodcuts in Japan began to wane, under the influence of newly imported reproduction technologies like lithography and photography. On

top of this, Japanese society was already rapidly modernizing, leading to the disappearance of the old social and commercial context of ukiyo-e printmaking.

Japanese prints remained, however, in great demand in the West. Hundreds of thousands of prints were successfully sold by Japanese traders in cities like Paris and Boston. This set young publisher Watanabe Shōzaburō thinking. On the one hand, he noted the interest in the West in traditional printmaking and the great names of the past. On the other hand, he realized that in his own country the traditional technique, based on cooperation between different actors, was gradually disappearing. There were fewer and fewer publishers, while their output was increasing significantly in the form of newspapers, magazines, books, posters and so on.

In 1907 Watanabe Shōzaburō settled in Tokyo where he started making reproductions of the highest quality. In this way he ensured that the traditional technique of woodblock printing was not lost and that the Japanese themselves become aware of the importance and beauty of the ukiyo-e.

He then went looking for a new formal language. After a period of arduous exploration, production of the 'new prints', or in Japanese shin hanga, started in 1916.

Success was immediate: at home the new aesthetics caught on at once, and abroad the prices of works by these new artists often exceeded those of the great eighteenth and nineteenth-century names.

Watanabe gathered around him a group of artists able to put across his vision of printmaking. His success encouraged other publishers to follow suit. The ultimate result was a movement that produced some 3,000 designs, characterized both by their exceptionally high technical quality and their novelty.

Kawase Hasui's striking landscape prints represent an enormous stylistic break with the past, and the prints of Itō Shinsui bear little resemblance to those of his illustrious predecessors. Pigments, paper types, special effects and the meticulous quality control of Watanabe and his fellow publishers led from 1916 to the Second World War to the creation of prints that, owing to the way they were produced, acquired another status than the classic ukiyo-e. Prints had become top quality luxury products.

The Art & History Museum's collection of Japanese prints

The Art & History Museum owns an exceptional collection of Japanese prints. Many of them have retained their original colours through not being on permanent display, others are extremely rare. As a result, since the 1970s, after a long period of remaining concealed from the world, the collection has gained a worldwide and undisputed fame.

The core of the collection was acquired by the museum in 1905, through the purchase of the Edmond Michotte collection. This included, among other things, 4,666 prints. To this was added the collection of 266 prints that the Belgian government had already purchased in

1889 from well-known Parisian dealer Siegfried Bing. Various donations and purchases followed.

Today the collection consists of more than 7,500 prints, including some sixty shin hanga works. The first shin hanga were acquired in 1935 in Japan; some are donations from the artists to the curator of the day. It was far-sighted to include these now highly sought-after prints in the museum's collection.

The structure of the exhibition in brief

The exhibition is arranged chronologically. The story begins with the earliest experiments and runs until 1916. Then there is an introduction to the two most important genres: landscapes and female portraits. These genres are further subdivided into the periods before and after the Kantō earthquake of 1 September 1923. This natural disaster can be viewed as a fault line because large stocks of prints, designs and printing blocks were then lost. This is followed by sections devoted to the three other genres: the kabuki theatre, nature and modernity. In addition, a space is dedicated to the technical side of print production, with an emphasis on the specificity of the shin hanga tradition.

The exhibition is structured in nine sections with a total of about 230 prints.

- SECTION 1 (15 items) : The Early Years, the experiments between 1907 and 1916 : *Uehara Konen, Takahashi Hiroaki, Fritz Capelari, Charles Bartlett*
- SECTION 2 (19 items) : Women's portraits before the 1923 earthquake : *Hashiguchi Goyō, Itō Shinsui*
- SECTION 3 (57 items) : Landscapes before the 1923 earthquake : *Itō Shinsui, Kawase Hasui, Furuya Taiken, ...*
- SECTION 4 (24 items) : Women's portraits after the earthquake : *Itō Shinsui, Torii Kotondo, Yamakawa Shūho, Hirano Hakuho, ...*
- SECTION 5 (16 items) : Stars of the kabuki theatre : *Natori Shunsen, Yamamura Kōka, Yoshikawa Kampō, ...*
- SECTION 6 (12 items) : Nature : birds and flowers : *Ohara Koson, Takahashi Hiroaki, ...*
- SECTION 7 (21 items) : Modernity, Modern women and modern cityscapes : *Kobayakawa Kiyoshi, Komura Settai, Itō Shinsui, Torii Kotondo, ...*
- SECTION 8 (57 items) : Landscapes from 1923 to 1940, with a single post-war addition : *Kawase Hasui, Itō Shinsui, Takahashi Hiroaki, Kasamatsu Shirō, Itō Takashi, Tsuchiya Koitsu*
- SECTION 9 (11 items) : Techniques : *Kawase Hasui*

In Short...

The exhibition Shin hanga – The new prints of Japan 1900-1960 fits into the Art & History Museum's vision of sharing top works with a wider public. The subject matter is easily accessible. The fascinating beauty and rarity of the prints will be mouth-watering not only for enthusiasts, but also for those discovering this art for the first time.

The museum offers you numerous options to make your visit even more pleasant. Guided tours, lectures and holiday courses for children are organised. Receptions for small or large groups and for companies can be tailor-made for you, offering a stylish event for your guests. Companies can partner the exhibition project to emphasize their social commitment.

With the support of the Embassy of Japan in Belgium.

3. ACTIVITIES AROUND THE EXHIBITION

Activities in the context of the exhibition *Shin hanga – The new prints of Japan (1900-1960)*

EVENTS

Sat 15.10.2022

14:30 & 14:45

Aya Suzuki - Nine Bells

percussion & butō-danse

as part of Artonov Festival (8 - 16.10.2022)

€22 / free -18 years (combi performance + expo)

Sat 22.10.2022

17:00 - 01:00

Museum Night Fever

demonstrations moku hanga (Vladimir Ivaneanu), performance (Tsubasa Hori), music (Alek et les Japonaises)

€ 15 / presale

Sat 3.12.2022

Eventday with Davidsfonds Academie – in Dutch

Shin hanga. The new print of Japan (1900-1960) with lectures by Commissioner Nathalie Vandeperre & dr. Freya Terryn, guided tour of the exhibition and (optional) workshop calligraphy & tea ceremony

€ 88 / € 78 (members Davidsfonds)

Sat 14 & Sun 15.01.2023

Finissage weekend

AUTUMN & WINTER VACATION WORKSHOPS

Wed 2 – Fri 4.11.2022

Autumn workshops 'Autum in Japan : momiji-gari' – in French or Dutch

Workshops 3 days

6-12 years

€ 75 / € 60 (sister or brother)

Mo 2 – Fri 6.01.2023

Winterworkshop 'Shin manga (=^.ω.^=)' – in French or Dutch

Worskshops 5 days

6-12 years

€ 125 / € 100 (sister or brother)

WORKSHOP X RHOK ACADEMIE - in English

with *Koyuki Kazahaya* on Japanese woodcut prints

Sat 26.11, 3.12, 10.12

9.00 – 17.00

€ 120 / € 95 (students RHoK) / € 70 student -30 years / - 18 years)

GUIDED TOURS

Shin hanga – Saturday tours

14:00 in NL / FR / EN

15 & 29.10

12 & 26.11

10.12.2022

& 7.01.202

€ 19 / € 7 (-18 years)

4. UPCOMING EXHIBITION

Exhibition « Egyptian Expeditions »

31 March – 1 October, 2023

In 2023, during six months (from 31 March to 1 October), the Art & History Museum will present a major exhibition devoted to the history of Egyptology in Belgium. Some two hundred pieces from its storerooms will be complemented by several must-haves from the museum's galleries and an important work from the Royal Palace's collection. This exhibition is organised by the research platform Pyramids & Progress, a collaboration between Belgian universities and museums.

The exhibition broadly follows the chronology of the composition of the Egyptian collection in the context of the museum's growth from 1835 onwards and, intertwined with it, the chronology of the study of ancient Egyptian culture in Belgium. It features numerous collectors, patrons and prominent figures such as Leopold II, the Egyptologist Jean Capart and Queen Elisabeth. All this is also situated in the international context of the time, with major figures such as Jean-François Champollion, the decipherer of hieroglyphs, the adventurer and explorer Giovanni Battista Belzoni and the British Egyptologist William Flinders Petrie.

The exhibition will focus on the theme of life after death, as it is of great importance for the interpretation of the art of the land of the pharaohs. One of the central works will therefore be the Book of the Dead of Neferrenpet, which will be taken out of the storerooms. Newly restored and scientifically researched panoramic archive photos from the 19th and early 20th centuries will evoke the pioneer era. The central part of the lost *Panorama du Caire* (Emile Wauters, 1880-1881), which has recently surfaced, has also been restored and will be on display in the exhibition. The Egyptian contemporary artist Sara Sallam has been invited as artist in residence and will enrich the exhibition with several of her creations. She was born in Egypt in 1991 and now lives and works in the Netherlands.

5. PARTNERS



6. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Shin hanga. The new prints of Japan 1900-1960

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Opening Hours

Tuesdays to Fridays: 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Last tickets at 4 p.m.

Closed on Mondays, on 25th December and 1st January

Admission prices

€16 / 12 / 6

free for 0-18 years

free for museumPASSmusée-holders

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Visuals

<https://we.tl/t-6O8qmg4vti>



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